Role of Socio-Economic Conditions and Parental Illiteracy in Student Absenteeism

An Action Research Study at National Academy High School, Bahadurganj, Kishanganj, Bihar

Abstract

Student absenteeism is a major challenge in secondary schools located in remote and economically backward regions. This action research study examines the role of socio-economic conditions and parental illiteracy in causing irregular attendance among students at National Academy High School, Bahadurganj, Kishanganj, Bihar. The study identifies economic pressure on students, lack of parental awareness, disinterest in formal education, and poor school infrastructure as key factors. Practical interventions were implemented to improve attendance and student engagement.

1. Introduction

Regular attendance is essential for effective teaching and learning. However, in many remote areas of Bihar, students face serious challenges that prevent them from attending school regularly. National Academy High School is situated in a rural and economically disadvantaged area where many students belong to poor families. Education is often seen as secondary to earning a livelihood. This action research aims to study the underlying reasons for student absenteeism and explore practical solutions within the school environment.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite teachers' regular efforts, a significant number of students remain absent from school. Many students are engaged in daily wage work to support their families. Around 80% of parents are illiterate and do not understand the long-term value of education. Additionally, traditional classroom teaching does not appear to provide immediate financial benefits, leading to low student motivation. Poor infrastructure further discourages regular attendance.

3. Objectives of the Study

To identify socio-economic factors responsible for student absenteeism.

To study the impact of parental illiteracy on students' attendance.

To analyze students' attitudes toward schooling in relation to livelihood needs.

To implement strategies to improve attendance and student engagement.

4. Research Questions

How do economic conditions affect student attendance?

What role does parental illiteracy play in absenteeism?

How does school infrastructure influence students' interest in schooling?

Can simple school-based interventions improve attendance?

5. Methodology

Research Type: Action Research

Participants: 60 students from Classes IX and X

Tools Used:

Attendance registers

Student interviews

Parent interaction meetings

Teacher observation

Duration: 1 month

6. Causes of Student Absenteeism

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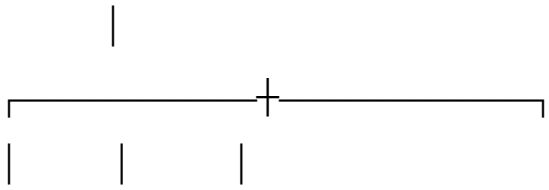
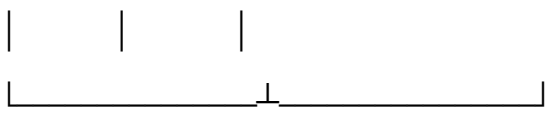
Student Absenteeism



Economic Pressure on Students (daily wage work)

Parental Illiteracy (lack of awareness)

School Infrastructure (poor facilities)



Low Interest in School

7. Findings

Nearly 65% of students were involved in part-time or daily wage work.

About 80% of parents were illiterate and showed limited interest in school matters.

Students felt that schooling did not help improve their immediate financial condition.

Poor infrastructure reduced students' motivation to attend regularly.

8. Interventions Implemented

Parent Awareness Meetings explaining the long-term benefits of education.

Flexible Classroom Interaction allowing students to share their work experiences.

Life-skill and value-based discussions linking education with future employment.

Positive reinforcement for regular attendance.

Teacher–student counseling to motivate drop-out-prone students.

9. Results of the Intervention

After one month of intervention:

Student attendance improved by 15–18%.

Parents showed greater willingness to send children to school.

Students became more open and engaged during classes.

Improved teacher–student relationships were observed.

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that student absenteeism in remote areas is largely influenced by socio-economic pressures and parental illiteracy. Education competes with survival needs, making attendance irregular. However, with teacher initiative, community involvement, and simple motivational strategies, attendance can be improved even with limited resources.

11. Recommendations

Regular parent–teacher interaction in local language.

Linking education with vocational awareness.

Improvement of basic school infrastructure.

Government support for economically weaker students.

Continuous counseling and mentoring of students.

12. Educational Implications

This action research highlights the importance of understanding students' socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers must adopt empathetic, flexible, and community-oriented approaches to address absenteeism in rural schools.

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